

QUEST

*Quality Jobs,
Equity, Strategy
and Training*



MAINE
DEPARTMENT OF
LABOR

Goal

To enable eligible **individuals** (more on eligibility on next slide) who have been adversely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic to enter, return to, or advance in Good-jobs*, as defined in [TEGL 07-22](#)

The pandemic exacerbated social and economic inequities, and this grant seeks to address these.

QUEST has identified three industries that need growth.

- Infrastructure
- Environment and Climate (Green Energy)
- Care Economy



Eligibility

Eligible Participants are:

- Individuals temporarily or permanently laid off as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic, which may include individuals who were let go and/or left employment because of the pandemic and who have not returned to a “Good-job”.
- Long-term unemployed individuals - which for the QUEST grant include individuals who want to work and meet one of the following: a. Have been without employment for 15 consecutive or non-consecutive weeks in the last 52 weeks b. Have never worked or have never worked in the in the United States but are authorized to.
- Dislocated workers as defined by WIOA Section 3(15)
- Displaced Homemakers as defined by WIOA Section 3(16)
- Self-employed individuals who are unemployed or significantly underemployed at the time of eligibility determination
- Significantly underemployed individuals at time of eligibility determination

Eligibility

Individuals temporarily or permanently laid off as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic, which may include individuals who were let go and/or left employment because of the pandemic and who have not returned to a “Good-job”.

Good-jobs:

- pay at least 235% of the Federal poverty level or \$17.02 per hour (as of January 1, 2024) and provide at least 30 hours a week of paid employment
- have transparent and nondiscriminatory hiring practices and clear paths for professional development and advancement
- provide access to employer-provided benefits, including health care, paid vacation, and sick leave
- prioritize worker health and safety and are in companies and organizations that support workers’ rights and offer workers a voice in the workplace
- All workers are respected, empowered, and treated fairly. Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility (DEIA) is a core value and practiced norm in the workplace.

Eligibility

Long-term unemployed individuals - which for the QUEST grant include individuals who want to work and meet one of the following:

- Have been without employment for 15 consecutive or non-consecutive weeks in the last 52 weeks
- Have never worked or have never worked in the in the United States but are ***authorized*** to.

Eligibility

Dislocated workers as defined by WIOA Section 3(15)

Essentially, this is anyone who has been laid off through no fault of their own.

Eligibility

Displaced Homemakers as defined by WIOA Section 3(16)

This is someone who has been providing unpaid services to family members in the home but is no longer being supported by that person.

This individual is depending on income from another family member or is experiencing difficulty finding a job.

Eligibility

Significantly underemployed individuals at time of eligibility determination.

Underemployed, according to the Policy PY22 QUEST Dislocated Worker Grant Guidelines, this means:

- Part-time
- Employed for less than 30 hours per week
- Employed in a position that is inadequate with respect for skills, experience, and training
- Those whose current earnings are less than 85% of previous earnings
 - *For example: $40 * \$20.00 = \800 . $\$800 * .85 = \680 .*
 - *That means if current earnings are less than \$680, the individual is eligible.*
- ***REMEMBER, one only needs to check one of the boxes to be eligible!***

QUEST DWG SELF-ATTESTATION FORM

Please complete, sign, date, and return this form to staff.

Applicant Name: _____	MJL ID#: _____
Category 1: Dislocated Worker Status (Select all that apply) <input type="checkbox"/> Lost or quit employment due to the COVID pandemic and have not returned to full-time employment, <input type="checkbox"/> Laid off due to company closure or downsizing <input type="checkbox"/> Receiving or have exhausted Unemployment Compensation (or has been employed for a duration to demonstrate attachment to the workforce but has not yet earned enough to establish a benefit year and receive unemployment). <input type="checkbox"/> Was self-employed but no longer employed <input type="checkbox"/> Displaced homemaker (was dependent on someone else in the household while caring for family, but no longer supported by that person's income) <input type="checkbox"/> Spouse of an active-duty armed forces member who is unemployed or underemployed and/or has lost their job as a result of a permanent duty station change	
Category 2: Long-Term Unemployed (Select all that apply) <input type="checkbox"/> Have been without employment for 15 consecutive or non-consecutive weeks or more in the last 52 weeks <input type="checkbox"/> Have never worked in the U.S.A. and are authorized to work in the U.S.A.	
Category 3: Significantly Underemployed (Select all that apply) <input type="checkbox"/> A. Employed part-time, seasonal, temporary, or in a short-term survival position, <input type="checkbox"/> B. Employed less than 30 hours a week but want/need a full-time employment, <input type="checkbox"/> C. Employed but earn less than 85% of my prior earnings or earn less \$17.02 (235% of the 2024 Federal poverty level). <input type="checkbox"/> D. Lost primary job and now employed in a position that is not appropriate based on education and experience levels, <input type="checkbox"/> E. Self-Employed but earn less than 85% of my prior earnings or earn less than \$17.02 (235% of the 2024 Federal poverty level).	
<i>Please complete below if you have worked previously</i> Former Employer Name: _____ Hours per week _____ Hourly wage \$ _____ Current Employer Name: _____ Hours per week _____ Hourly wage \$ _____ If not currently employed leave blank. <i>To figure 85% of former earnings multiply current hours per week by hourly wage (example: 30 hours per week at \$17.00/hour = \$510/week and multiply by .85 which = \$433.50, current weekly earnings less than \$433.50 = eligible).</i> If you selected D. in Category 3 above, please explain how your current employment does not fully use your education and experience levels. <i>Examples: I have a four-year degree and ten years of experience as an engineer at Jay Paper, since the layoff I have been employed as a store clerk at Home Depot OR I have a degree as a doctor from a foreign county that is not recognized in the U.S.A. so I cannot work at the level of my degree or experience.</i>	

By signing this form, I certify that the information provided by me is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge and that I understand this information is subject to verification and that I may be required to document its accuracy. I also understand that incomplete or misrepresented information may be grounds for immediate termination from the program.

Applicant Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Certified by Program Staff Member: _____ **Date:** _____
Printed Staff Name Here

This Agency provides equal opportunity in employment and programs.
 Auxiliary aids and services are available to individuals with disabilities upon request

Self Attestation

- Eligibility for QUEST is done by self-assessment. Participants **only need to check one of the boxes** to become eligible for enrollment in the QUEST program.
-
- *Category 1: Dislocated worker status*
- *Category 2: Long term unemployed*
- *Category 3: Significantly underemployed*
- Take a moment to look at the self-attestation form

QUEST

Two-year dislocated worker grant. *September 2022-2024, possible extension till September 2025*

Maine received over \$7 million to serve individuals statewide

Focus on *Good-Jobs*

778 participants

QUEST will serve

Low wage workers

Racial and ethnic
minorities

Individuals in
recovery from
substance abuse
disorder

Women with
dependent care
challenges

Individuals with
disabilities

Immigrants and
Refugees

Young adults aged
20-24

People without a
high school
diploma or GED

Justice involved or
individuals who
will be released in
the next 12 months

Individuals from
historically
marginalized
communities

Key Activities of the QUEST grant

- Developing and expanding partnerships with organizations that serve, train, and hire individuals from underserved and marginalized communities most impacted by the pandemic
- Expanding partnerships with businesses and industries hiring workers into high-demand, high-quality jobs
- Ensuring worker voice by getting input from and partnering with dislocated workers, individual workers, labor unions, labor-management partnerships, and other relevant organizations
- Conducting community outreach campaigns in culturally and linguistically appropriate ways
- Improving the transparency of career paths and promotional opportunities in targeted industries
- Developing work-based learning opportunities, including on-the-job training connection to registered apprenticeship
- Providing career, training, and support services that promote successful completion of workforce services and launch workers into longer-term, employer-supported training opportunities associated with economic mobility.

Questions?



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Who are the service providers?

Workforce Solutions www.workforcesolutionsme.org/

CONTACT: Sarah Overlock, 207-930-7047
intake@workforcesolutionsme.org

*Cumberland, Knox, Lincoln, Sagadahoc, Waldo and York County
residents*

Eastern Maine Development Corporation (EMDC): www.emdc.org/

CONTACT: Loretta Alley, 207 991 0147 info@emdc.org

*Hancock, Penobscot, Piscataquis, Washington, Androscoggin, Franklin,
Kennebec, Oxford and Somerset County residents*

Aroostook County Action Program (ACAP): www.acap-me.org

CONTACT: Amanda Keegan, 207-764-3721 akeegan@acap.me.org

Aroostook County Residents

Maine Apprenticeship Program (MAP)



MAP staff work with businesses to create develop customized registered apprenticeship programs (RAP's) to train and prepare their current and future workforce to meet business needs through a structured training program that leads to career advancement, higher wages a Nationally Recognized Certificate.



Registered apprentices are employees who earn while they learn, receive progressive wage increases, classroom instruction and mentored, structured on-the-job learning. There are currently 1,333 active apprentices working for 447 Maine employers in 180 different occupations. Apprentices are a minimum of 16-years old, while the average age of an apprentice in Maine is 29.31 years.

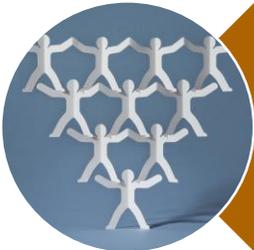


Certified pre-apprenticeship programs, established in June of 2023, articulate to and prepare individuals for successful entry into registered apprenticeship programs, are typically less than 6-months in length and can be paid or unpaid. Since June of 2023, MAP has certified 38 pre-apprenticeship programs and trained 583 pre-apprentices, including many currently or formerly incarcerated individuals.

Jobs for Veteran State Grant (JVSG)



The Jobs for Veteran State Grant or JVSG is a federal formula grant that funds staffing of the Veterans' Representatives at the Maine Department of Labor. These Veterans' Representatives specialize in Veteran employment support by first working with eligible Veterans and spouses to ensure employment readiness and then advocating with area businesses looking to hire.



The goal of the JVSG Program is to identify, assist and place eligible Veterans and spouses into meaningful and sustained employment. This could mean aiding a Veteran to obtain short-term employment while pursuing higher career goals or education, aiding with upskills allowing increased opportunities for career upgrades, or directing Veterans to alternative services and support to help eliminate significant barriers to employment.



Veterans' Representatives work with justice involved Veterans nearing release as well as those that may have recovery challenges. Recently incarcerated Veterans or those nearing release are those meeting one of the significant barriers to employment criteria. Of course, justice involved Veterans or those with recovery challenges do present a challenge when placing in employment. However, Veterans' Representatives work closely with second chance employers to advocate for hiring.

Competitive Skills Scholarship Program (CSSP)



The Competitive Skills Scholarship Program (CSSP) provides lower-income individuals who lack a marketable degree or certification the opportunity to access post-secondary education including associate degrees, bachelor degrees or industry recognized certifications that lead to employment in high-wage in-demand jobs.



Collaborating with various partners, including Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) SNAP Employment and Training (SNAP-E&T), Higher Opportunity for Pathways to Employment (HOPE), and others is often essential for the participant to finish with minimal financial strain and the greatest chance of achieving their final goal.



CSSP assists individuals in re-entry and recovery who are interested in obtaining credentials in a high-wage in-demand occupation. The support provided by CSSP can assist with the cost of tuition, books and fees that are not paid by other sources such as federal financial aid. CSSP provides supports beyond tuition which may include transportation reimbursement, assistance with auto repair costs and for full-time students meeting household income requirements, a monthly stipend.

Re-Employment Services and Eligibility & Assessment (RESEA)



The RESEA program is a welcome committee to clients who are on Unemployment and shows them how BES (Career Centers) can be utilized. Clients are taken through an individualized one on one session to ensure they are aware of the resources available to them.

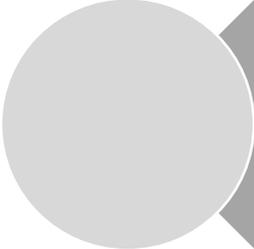


Our goals are to help clients get back to work or in a training program as soon as possible.

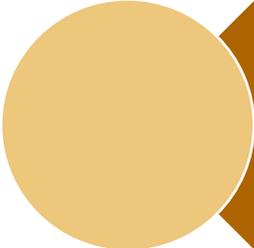


When speaking with clients during a session, if they indicate a criminal history, such as felonies, we provide all resources available to them about employers who are felony friendly in their area or talk about training programs to help them get past these obstacles.

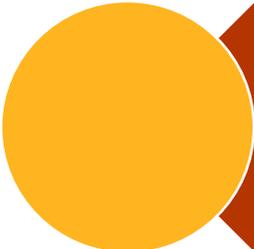
Progressive Employment



The Bureau of Employment Services is partnering across MDOL and with other workforce partners to expand the utilization of Progressive Employment, an evidence-based dual customer practice proven successful in increasing the employment of individuals who have not been traditionally employed in the workforce, including those who have little or no work history due to barriers -including stigma - but want to work.



For the last five years, MDOL's Division of Vocational Rehabilitation incrementally and successfully deployed Progressive Employment statewide to employers and people with disabilities of all ages who are seeking employment. The team is working to pilot this evidence-based approach among two communities disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and facing significant barriers to employment— individuals who are justice-involved and those in recovery. Engagement of this previously untapped workforce will be key to Maine's economic recovery and the achievement of adding 75,000 workers to our talent pool as identified in the 10-Year Economic Development Strategy.



The model will begin being implemented in Machias on July 25th, in Bangor on August 24th, and in Portland in the fall. The model has access to some ARPA funding to support work experience, on-the-job training, and support services for community members participating in this approach.